

THE MEASURE

A JOURNAL OF POETRY



Poems by Winifred Wells, Carolyn Hall, Abbie
Huston Evans, Harold Vinal, Wade Oliver,
Elisabeth Thomas, and others — — — — —

"Herrick's Kin," in Review, by Kenneth Slade Alling — —

\$2.50 by the Year — — — — — Single Copies 25c

Published Monthly at 449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

Number 33 — — — — — November, 1923

Entered as second-class matter February 28, 1921, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879

Contents

POEMS	Page
Lace Shroud. By Winifred Welles.....	3
The Vine. By Abbie Huston Evans.....	4
"- - - Will He Give Him a Stone?" By Abbie Huston Evans	4
Shore. By Elisabeth Thomas.....	5
A Voice in the Night. By Martha Webster.....	5
Lean. By Wade Oliver.....	6
The Rabbit Hunt. By W. L. Flanagan.....	6
Tracks. By Harold Vinal.....	8
Two Songs. By Carolyn Hall.....	9
Madison Square. By Louise Townsend Nicholl.....	10
Dead Leaves. By Louise Townsend Nicholl.....	10
Group. By Louise Townsend Nicholl.....	11
Good-bye. By Giuseppe Cautela.....	12
Buona Sera. By Giuseppe Cautela.....	12
Low Tide. By Kenneth Slade Alling.....	13
Three Women at Low Tide. By Kenneth Slade Alling.....	13
Boast. By Kenneth Slade Alling.....	13
Ambition. By Elizabeth Stewart Metzger.....	14
IN REVIEW	
"Herrick's Kin." By Kenneth Slade Alling.....	15

The Measure

A Journal of Poetry

NUMBER 33

NOVEMBER, 1923

Lace Shroud

I PROMISE that in death
I shall float out as lost
As though I rode my breath
Upon the midnight frost.

Oh cold and small and still
My angel host will be,
As if across the sill
A bird had come for me.

Though hanging in the snow
His trumpet made of glass,
You will not hear him blow,
You will not see me pass.

But on the pane his claw
With crystal in its tip,
Precise and clear will draw
The map of my white trip.

—*Winifred Welles*

Copyright, 1923, by the Editors

The Vine

LOVE is quaint like columbine,
Queer and new like irises
Among moon-faced flowers; a vine
All original, like these.

And it matters not a whit
What it climbs on, I am told:
An old shed will do for it—
Or a pillar cased in gold;

So it have, till it be grown,
Something for a trellis,—good!
Old love can climb round its own
Twisted honeysuckle wood.

“---Will He Give Him a Stone?”

I PICK it up, I turn it over, I scoff,
I never saw a loaf that looked like this,
That weighed so heavy, had a sound like flint.
Crack it; sniff; taste it: can one swallow it?
Is it stone? is it bread? try, can one swallow it?
—Yes, a crumb at a time—a crumb at a time, O God!
Bitter? Past words; but somehow, strangely, bread!

—*Abbie Huston Evans*

Shore

A RED cow stands upon the sea,
Cropping the meadow grass;
While she lifts her head at me
Two waves behind her pass.

Her hoof is on the pimperl,
Her haunch is on the foam,
Her horn moves up before the sail,
Beckoning the traveler home.

—*Elisabeth Thomas*

A Voice in the Night

WHAT did it want?
The stark old tree
Put nether lip to the window pane
And called: "Aunt Aunt"
All night patiently.

This house is old.
Its menfolk ploughed,—
Father, then son;—its women came,
Bore babes, and passed;—it held
Their hearthfires proud.

"Aunt Aunt"
Was there one who set seed
In an April glow, or sapling here
Now very old and exceeding gaunt,
And in aged need?

"Aunt Aunt"

—*Martha Webster*

Lean

THESE are the things I greatly prize:
Lean waterfalls beneath gray skies,
Lean lightnings, and the hungry keen
Of winter winds, race-stripped and lean.

These are the men I call my friends:
Lean hunters from the far world ends,
Lean runners on the watery ways,
Lean watchers over fattened days.

These are the minds that call to mine:
Lean spirits seeking the divine,
Lean minds that lighten through the mirk,
And fly at truth's heart like a dirk!

—*Wade Oliver*

The Rabbit Hunt

SNOW in the grove! Snow on the field!
Rabbit tracks on the hill;
Cold and clean, the glistening snow,—
White and still.

The crimson sun bursts through the dawn,
Flame red upon the shining snow,
And rushes on, becoming gold.
Beast stirs to life and rouses beast
Man rouses man, and day begins.

Silence the distant bay of dogs;
A moment, and the calls of men
Sound faintly over distant hills.

Dogs bound through a broken fence;
Hunters follow with loaded guns,
Pushing aside the low-hung boughs
Of young and ragged, snow-trimmed trees;—
In an open, creek-cut field,
At a mound of snow, the happy dogs
Sniff, and whine, and paw the earth.

A cutting wind sweeps through the grove,
And, from the mound, with ears laid back,
And legs outstretched, a rabbit leaps
Beyond the watchful dogs, and scurries
Dogs rush — guns aim —
A shot upon the frozen air

The dogs, like statues, each with paw
Upraised, with pointed nose thrust forward,
Keenly watch the wriggling rabbit
And the blood upon the snow.

The hunters crush the rabbit's skull
A moment glory over prey
A cord a knot about the feet

They hasten eagerly through a fence
And up a snow-swept, treeless slope;
Pause for a moment at the crest

Again again the mournful, baying
Sounds. Silence A distant shot.

Snow in the grove! Snow on the field!
Hunters' tracks on the hill;
Crimson stained, the glistening snow,—
Cold and still.

—*W. L. Flanagan*

Tracks

SNOW covers up the tracks of furry things,
That helter skelter run across a wood,
Never a fox goes through the neighborhood,
But snow obliterates his prints and flings
A wall of white between each tree and shrub;
Never a ferrit hurries from his lair,
A mink or rabbit hurries out of air,
But in the dark the frost begins to rub.

There is a time when there is no ground seen,
And fields are covered and no river's sound
Drones in the night, only some wind between
The leaning bushes whispers to the ground.
Now the swift deer may run, the squirrels lean
Are safe as moles that burrow underground.

—*Harold Vinal*

Two Songs

THE SINGING HANDS

THESE are the same mute hands, my dear,
That played for me to sing
Before you came, in all the time
Before this deep white Spring.

And this is what love's done to them
To make them mute no more,
Turned into nightingales the hands
Which never sang before.

LUZ DE MI CORAZON

CANDLE niche you were, my heart,
And never a candle here?
No wonder the print was often dim,
The meaning seldom clear.

Since you have come to light the page
I can read every word;
How shining and plain the pattern is
Of all that ever occurred!

—*Carolyn Hall*

Madison Square

CLOCK-FACES lighted and the lighted moon,
Telling the time of night,
The time of month.

No figures and no movement on the moon,
Marked strangely
As with clock-hands that have passed.

Now from the clock-tower hour-bells,
But from the moon no sound.

The months go silently.

Dead Leaves

THE fireplace is filled with colored leaves.
They burn there like a fire without the power of flame
To burn itself away.
They have been there a week and more,
And stay the same.
They are the leaves which were not let
To vent themselves by falling,
Letting go, and fluttering down,
And being tossed along the ground,
And mixed into the earth.
They did not have a chance to make their desperation
And their mirth
To motion, and so get dead.
They are the ones, instead,
Which were pulled off in branchesful,
Intact, entire,
And so can never die.
They are like memories, perhaps
Burning in flameless fire.
Dead leaves live so much longer in a house
Than green ones would.

Group

HORSES on the front deck of a ferry boat
In the rain
Like sculpture on the façade of a building.
The tarpaulin curtains of their great wagons
Fill and flap,
Slowly and extravagantly.

Shiny black curtains, straining and swelling
In the wind;
Straight gray rain;
Blown mist;
And smooth brown horses,
Turning glossy black with rain.

They alone, who have the will to move,
Are motionless,
Not dumb and patient,
But cognizant of splendor,
Of standing close to water
And being swiftly borne through rain
Sentient sculpture on the face of a building
Which moves swiftly with them through water
To another shore.

—*Louise Townsend Nicholl*

Good-bye

NO one heard you say "Good-bye," but I; softly, in your quiet way.

Your white sandaled feet stayed for a moment, and leaving you, I carried away the rhythm of your step.

You appeared still; motionless and thoughtful, as if your breathing stopped after you said "Good-bye."

It will be May again: the garden path will be aglow with roses gasping in the sun, and as I shall walk alone, speechless, they will say: "Good-bye."

Like that day we watched the tranquil sea, (which seemed to smother in its depth many a sorrow), I shall stop and watch it again hearing the waves roll rudely on the sand, and say: "Good-bye."

I will seek you at dusk in the long, gloomy road flanked by cypresses, where, languidly, the last timid rays of the sun have said; "Good-bye."

You may come perhaps in your white sandaled feet when the moon is high, and as you walk silently, it will gleam on your brown hair like a diadem. No branch shall stir the air, all will be transmuted and still; only your lips shall move imperceptibly, saying again, "Good-bye."

I will not move; but watching your shadow under the gleam of the moon pass into darkness, I shall weep and say: "Good-bye."

Buona Sera

UNTIL last night you never said "Buona Sera."

Your Italian broke through the virgin door

Of your mouth like a cool, hidden spring.

And your voice sounded as a silvery jet climbing and shimmering
in the restful light of the moon.

—*Giuseppe Cautela*

Low Tide

HERE where the sea has lain the sea is not,
But walks immensely nigh.
Over the fertile barrenness of this spot
The broken sea-pools lie.

Three Women at Low Tide

ON this uncovered sea-field gleaners go;
Or are they divers, high and dry, for pearls?
I will not question them, they only know,
These spinster women who were never girls,
They plunder busily the brown sea slag
For the black muddied clams. I know they came
Out of the sea; some burly ocean hag
Their mother with strange eyes like yellow flame.

For they are part and portion of the coast:
They bend as the waves bend and rising up
They have the ancient aspect of a ghost
That sets his mouth to the sea as to a cup;
One of the many that the sea has slain,
Hoping to drink itself to flesh again.

Boast

BRITTLE words broken—they will wait,
So much strewn glass, to lacerate
The feet of unrelenting fate.
Broken bright splinters in the soles
Cutting like incandescent coals.

—*Kenneth Slade Alling.*

Ambition

I WOULD lie upon this strip of sand forever,
I would never crawl nor swim nor fly,
I would let the world go on as it must try,
Moving and being moved in some endeavor.

I would not stir,
I would let the tide come in,
Flinging its frankincense and myrrh;
Seeing it sucked again to black sea cavern
I'd let the gulls go over me and back,
And mate and nest in some unsavory crest,
And fight the problems birds must face,
Who fly and mate and nest in place.
I would not stir.
I would not stir,
Men might build bridges over me,
Cities of giants take to shapeliness,
Forests might come beside that single tree.
Wars could be fought by men or flies,
Turrets go tumbling from the skies,
What difference could it make to me?

God might come riding on a wind,
Or Fate or whosoever dared defile
Cosmic vacuity,
I would not crawl nor swim nor fly.

To make such way as best they could
To what? the barnacles have sucked the pier to rot.
Flesh is but substance as the wood.

—*Elizabeth Stewart Metzger*

The Measure & A Journal of Poetry

Published monthly by the Editors at 449 West 22nd Street, New York

Edited by Kenneth Slade Alling, Joseph Auslander, Padraic Colum, Carolyn Hall, Louise Townsend Nicholl, George O'Neil, Pitts Sanborn, Genevieve Taggard, Winifred Welles. From these nine an acting editor and an assistant are elected quarterly by the board. Associate Editors—Hervey Allen, Maxwell Anderson, and Frank Ernest Hill.

Subscription Manager—Frances C. L. Robbins.

ACTING EDITOR: GEORGE O'NEIL

Herrick's Kin

Collected Poems, Second Series, by W. H. Davies. Harper and Brothers, New York.

IT is to the great detriment of reviewers in general that they cannot live with a book for a year at least before airing their reactions to it. Sudden acquaintance must be superficially satisfied. The best things wear their hearts deep. But it may not be necessary in this case for I find even before beginning his book that I have something considerable in common with the poet. It seems, from the blurb, that he has been sent to the workhouse for vagrancy in New Haven. As I myself have several times barely escaped jail in that same city I come naturally by a fellowly, felony feeling for Mr. Davies who is something of an artless Herrick in the matter of his work. In place of the exquisitely consummated fancies of the great lover of saint Ben—we have, if we may call them so, rustic conceits made alive by a passionate naiveté.

He does not strain for the strange word—the effect of the whole in each poem is of more moment to him than any finical originality in details—“as soft as velvet” goes with his craftsmanship—a phrase that in the work of a lesser man would be deplored for its triteness. Nor is he given to odd rhymes (a bright obsession with some poets)

or many near rhymes and yet without their use he imparts to his work something of their effect—there are close harmonies in his thought.

In reading a poet—one of the noble ones—it is as with music; this strain, we say, this aria, reminds me . . . Davies' "The Hour of Magic" is the same moon enchanted landscape of Frost's "A Hill-side Thaw." Davies' "The Song of Life" is as if this poet had re-written E. A. Robinson's "Octaves"—for however they differ in treatment there is a deep similarity in theme. Here I have in the space of a few paragraphs already compared Davies with three poets. For the last two there is the casual likeness of one poem. For the first, Herrick, there is kinship.

"PASTURES"

That grass is tender, soft and sweet,
And well you young lambs know't:
I know a pasture twice as sweet,
Although I may not show't;
Where my five fingers go each night
To nibble, like you sheep,
All over my love's breast, and there
Lie down to sleep.

and in the witty twist of the last line of

I sit bewildered by those charms
That follow wave by wave all day;
When I would with one wave make free,
The others take my breath away.

But

But laughing gayly, her delighted breasts
Sent ripples down her body to her knees

seems to be utterly Davies as also "A Woman's Charms"—a catalogue far less elaborate than Herrick's studies in female anatomy, particularly his "The Discription of a Woman."

I do not mean to imply at all that Davies has the consummate sense of words of that master, but one may be kin to a king and have something royal in his face and yet not wear a crown.

With the true poet, the seeker after perfection, the dissatisfied artist, the soul's appetite is always her capacity, it is not that which he has done of which he is proud but that which he feels he has in him to do.

We poets pride ourselves on what
We feel, and not what we achieve.

Those lines alone show Davies to be the poet.

I should say there was no such thing as the Davies manner—or not anything so grown that we meet with it in poem after poem, a habit not to be thrown off.

“THE VILLAIN”

While joy gave clouds the light of stars,
That beamed where'er they looked;
And calves and lambs had tottering knees,
Excited while they sucked;
While every bird enjoyed his song,
Without one thought of harm or wrong—
I turned my head and saw the wind,
Not far from where I stood,
Dragging the corn by her golden hair
Into a dark and lonely wood.

“THE RAT”

“That woman there is almost dead,
Her feet and hands like heavy lead;
Her cat's gone out for his delight,
He will not come again this night.
“Her husband in a pothouse drinks,
Her daughter at a soldier winks;
Her son is at his sweetest game,
Teasing the cobbler old and lame.
“Now with these teeth that powder stones,
I'll pick at one of her cheekbones:
When husband, son and daughter come,
They'll soon see who was left at home.”

“THE CAT”

Within that porch, across the way,
I see two naked eyes this night;
Two eyes that neither shut nor blink,
Searching my face with a green light.
But cats to me are strange, so strange—
I cannot sleep if one is near;
And though I'm sure I see those eyes,
I'm not so sure a body's there!

If it is not too flatly obvious that a poet's work is typical of him, these three might be picked out as clean Davies.

Mystically beautiful is “Smiles” of which I quote the first stanza;

I saw a black girl once,
As black as winter's night;
Till through her parted lips
There came a flood of light;
It was the milky way
Across her face so black:
Her two lips closed again,
And night came back.

Very, very fortunate is this poet that he feels he has wed his muse for life—and that her companionship is to be unailing. So many

poets lose their full inspiration before they have hardly left their adolescence.

It was the summer of my life
Ere I began to sing;
Will winter be my summer, then,
As summer was my spring?
No matter how things change their hue,
We'll sing our number through.

and "My Youth"

My youth was my old age,
Weary and long;
It had too many cares
To think of song;
My moulting days all came
When I was young.

Now, in life's prime, my soul
Comes out in flower;
Late, as with Robin, comes
My singing power;
I was not born to joy
Till this late hour.

Davies can write a dramatic lyric—short, like his poems. "One Thing Wanting" is not unlike in subject what Hardy might have chosen, but the handling is of course less harsh than that would be of the tremendous novelist who turned poet—and we have so many poets and so few in our literature who can write a novel as Aeschylus might have written it.

It is almost invariable that the poet himself speaks in his poems. He speaks in "Wild Oats" but by way of contrast in "Passion's Hounds" allowed some country progenitor who lived on the pap of the old moralizing theology that still feeds many today, to speak for him.

But he is a true poet—he perceives beauty and she is sufficient unto him—he has no wish to analyze, to dissect her.

But riddles are not made for me,
My joy's in beauty, not its cause;
Then give me but the open skies,
And birds that sing in a green wood
That's snow-bound by anemones.

There is in him an unwearied delight; with unforced, with spontaneous, notes he sings of his companionships—and though a rover he is gregarious with the trees, with the streams, with the birds, with the butterflies, and with the gregarious stars.

—Kenneth Slade Alling

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Through an error, the poem "Inarticulate," published in the October *Measure*, was attributed to Mark Van Doren. The writer of the poem was Mrs. Marjory Stoneman Douglas, of Miami, Florida.

Leland Stanford Kemnitz of Detroit has offered through *The Bookfellows* a prize of one hundred dollars for the best sonnet or group of sonnets submitted before April 1, 1924. The judges will be John Erskine and William Griffith of New York, the former Professor of English Literature at Columbia University and President of the Poetry Society of America, and the latter Editor of *Current Opinion*. There are no restrictions as to the number of poems that may be submitted by each contestant. Preference will be given to the work of those whose verse has less frequently been placed before the public. The prize-winning sonnet and such others as may, with the consent of the author, be chosen for that purpose, will be published in a book. For conditions of the contest write to Flora Warren Seymour, Clerk, 4917 Blackstone Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

CONTRIBUTORS

MARTHA WEBSTER (Mrs. M. W. Merriehew)
lives in Long Beach, California.

DR. WADE OLIVER is head of the bacteriology
department in the Long Island College
Hospital.

W. L. FLANAGAN is a dentist in Mallard, Iowa,
and has never before published a poem.

GIUSEPPE CAUTELA is an Italian living in New
York and writing both poetry and prose
in English.

ELIZABETH STEWART METZGER, who lives in
New Bedford, Pa., and is a short story
writer, is now working on a novel.

The Measure

A Journal of Poetry

ACTIVE EDITORIAL BOARD

Kenneth Slade Alling	Carolyn Hall	Pitts Sanborn
Joseph Auslander	Louise Townsend Nicholl	Genevieve Taggard
Padraic Colum	George O'Neil	Winifred Welles

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Hervey Allen, Maxwell Anderson and Frank Ernest Hill

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE EDITORS

at

449 West 22nd Street, New York City

Subscription \$2.50 a year

Single copies 25 cents

WHERE THE MEASURE IS ON SALE

Brentano's	Fifth Avenue and 27th Street, New York City
The Village Bookshop.....	4 Christopher Street, New York City
The Washington Square Bookshop.....	27 West 8th Street, New York City
The Sunwise Turn, Inc.....	51 East 44th Street, New York City
The Little Book Store.....	51 East 60th Street, New York City

SCHENECTADY

The Dutch Oven in Dorp

45 Washington Avenue

BOSTON

Old Corner Bookstore

27 Bromfield Street

PORTLAND, OREGON
The J. K. Gill Company

DULUTH
The Glen-Clare Bookshop
23 N. 4th Avenue, West

PHILADELPHIA
The Little Brick House
332 South Camac Street

PITTSBURGH
Priscilla Guthrie's Bookshop, Inc.
516 William Penn Place

PLAINFIELD, N. J.
The Plainfield Bookshop
321 Park Avenue

CLEVELAND
Richard Laukluff, Bookseller

CHICAGO

Kroch's

The Walden Bookshop

Fanny Butcher's Bookshop

BERKELEY, CALIF.
Sather Gate Bookshop

SAN FRANCISCO
Paul Elder & Co.

MINNEAPOLIS
Mabel Ulrich's Bookstore

WASHINGTON, D. C.
Brentano's

PARIS
Brentano's
37 Avenue de l'Opera